



**His Grace Most Reverend Francis Leo  
Metropolitan Archbishop of Toronto  
2024 Message for October: Month of the Holy Rosary and of the Missions**

Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Lord,

*May Jesus and Mary be in your souls.*

Our annual celebration of this month is a source of great joy and consolation as we reflect on two compelling dimensions of our Catholic life: devotion to Our Lady by means of the prayer of the holy Rosary and the Church's missionary activity in the world today.

As a popular and tender devotion to the Mother of Jesus, the Rosary has been a staple of Catholic prayer life as well as an undeniable a font of comfort, help and inspiration for the faithful. We know that the liturgical feast of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary is celebrated annually on 7 October with its historical origin dating back to the military victory at Lepanto on October 7, 1571 through the Blessed Mother's intercession by means of the fervent prayer of the Rosary. Down through the ages, thanks to the special dedication to its promotion on the part of St. Dominic, the Order of Preachers, various Saints, Pope Leo XIII and others, countless men, women and children, laity, clergy and consecrated members of the Church and others, have sought refuge, assistance, solace and strength in this timeless prayer of the Church.

In this month especially, I encourage all the faithful to prayerfully and meditatively **read** Pope St. John Paul II's 2002 **Apostolic Letter**, *The Rosary of the Virgin Mary*. In it we will discover how Our Lady teaches us to contemplate the Face of Jesus through her own eyes; we will learn to meditate on the mysteries of the life of Christ as they were experienced by the Blessed Virgin; and we will be taught how to grow in intimacy with the Son of God through the guidance and closeness of Mother Mary. As the saintly pontiff wrote: "*With the Rosary, the Christian people sits at the school of Mary and is led to contemplate the beauty on the face of Christ and to experience the depths of his love. Through the Rosary the faithful receive abundant grace, as though from the very hands of the Mother of the Redeemer*" (1). In addition, we are encouraged to pray **for peace** in the world since "*to rediscover the Rosary means to immerse oneself in contemplation of the mystery of Christ who "is our peace", since he made "the two of us one, and broke down the dividing wall of hostility" (Eph 2:14). Consequently, one cannot recite the Rosary without feeling caught up in a clear commitment to advancing peace, especially in the land of Jesus, still so sorely afflicted and so close to the heart of every Christian*" (6). Finally, the other great prayer intention always associated with the Rosary, is that **for families**. As the Pope stated: "*A similar need for commitment and prayer arises in relation to another critical contemporary issue: the family, the primary cell of society, increasingly menaced by forces of disintegration on both the ideological and practical planes, so as to make us fear for the future*



*of this fundamental and indispensable institution and, with it, for the future of society as a whole. The revival of the Rosary in Christian families, within the context of a broader pastoral ministry to the family, will be an effective aid to countering the devastating effects of this crisis typical of our age” (6).*

With respect to the other major component of this month’s remembrance, the **Church’s missionary nature and activity**, we would be remiss if we did not find time to consider and to pray for all those who endeavour to bear witness to the Gospel of Jesus in the world, especially where He is not yet known, loved and served. This is a special time to support the missionary thrust of Holy Mother Church whose divine mission it is to bring Christ to all persons, to proclaim his saving truths and to spread his Kingdom throughout every land, in every human heart. Furthermore, and twinned to this evangelization dimension of the Church’s missionary calling, we are challenged to do what we can to support the numerous projects and activities, spiritual and temporal works of justice, mercy and charity, which bring dignity, hope and grace to the lives of many impoverished and needy world populations. In his recent **Message for World Mission Day**, Our Holy Father Pope Francis reminds us that: *“Mission, we see, is a tireless going out to all men and women, in order to invite them to encounter God and enter into communion with him. Tireless! God, great in love and rich in mercy, constantly sets out to encounter all men and women, and to call them to the happiness of his kingdom, even in the face of their indifference or refusal. Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd and messenger of the Father, went out in search of the lost sheep of the people of Israel and desired to go even further, in order to reach even the most distant sheep (cf. Jn 10:16). Both before and after his resurrection, he told his disciples, “Go!”, thus involving them in his own mission (cf. Lk 10:3; Mk 16:15). The Church, for her part, in fidelity to the mission she has received from the Lord, will continue to go to the ends of the earth, to set out over and over again, without ever growing weary or losing heart in the face of difficulties and obstacles.”*

Dear faithful of the Archdiocese of Toronto, we live indeed in times that are in desperate need of healing and peace, of truth and of witness, of holiness and of justice. Relying on the Lord’s providence and love, I earnestly encourage you to please consider praying the Rosary this month, every day, either alone or with your family, school or community, for those most in need of the Blessed Mother’s protection and care; those who are most vulnerable and in danger; those suffering and in despair; for peace in our world and for our families; for a renewal of our commitment to the Church’s missionary vocation and for our ongoing personal conversion. It is my sincerest prayer/hope that, as faithful of the Church of God in Toronto, celebrating the Month of the Rosary and of the Missions with great generosity and devotion, the Lord will be truly pleased and glorified and, through Our Lady’s intercession, bestow grace in abundance upon us.

Our Lady of the Rosary, Mother of the Missions, pray for us.